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SUBJECT: GERMANS DISCUSS "STAGNANT" CT RELATIONSHIP WITH
UZBEKS

Classified By: CDA Brad Hanson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: According to the German Ambassador, the German-Uzbek counterterrorism relationship is "stagnant," with no real dialog taking place. In addition to providing little credible information, the Government of Uzbekistan allows little access to the Islamic community, thus impeding Germany's ability to reach an independent assessment about the real terrorist threat here. The Uzbeks profess to want more cooperation, but their approach to cooperation is that German equipment and money are welcome, but that German values on such things as respect for human rights are not. The German Ambassador expects that the Uzbeks will "scream" publicly if European Union sanctions are not lifted completely in May, but that the decision will have little negative impact on the German base at Termez because of the money that the Uzbeks receive as a result of the German presence. End summary.

¶2. (C) German Ambassador Matthias Meyer told visiting S/CT Regional Affairs Officer Zachary Rothschild and Poloff on May 4 that the German-Uzbek counterterrorism relationship is "stagnant." Terrorism, Meyer complained, is an area where the Uzbeks will not allow a real dialog to take place. Rather, government officials present the official view of the situation, which, in the Uzbeks' mind, the Germans are not allowed to question. Meyer said that it is difficult to know the true threat of terrorism in Uzbekistan, because the government provides little credible information and prevents most access to the Islamic community, thus impeding the Germans' ability to reach an independent assessment of the situation.

¶3. (C) The German Ambassador said that the Government of Uzbekistan has shown interest in greater counterterrorism cooperation with Germany and the European Union. However, German ability to work with the Uzbeks is limited by human rights concerns. For example, Meyer said that Germany and other European governments have refused to return at least six persons wanted on terrorism charges by the Government of Uzbekistan. Germany does plan to provide limited training in Germany on how to deal with riots and other civil unrest, and the European Union also agreed in principle during the recent Astana meeting with Central Asian foreign ministers to increase regional counterterrorism cooperation. Overall, however, Meyer characterized Uzbekistan's approach to counterterrorism cooperation as essentially telling the Europeans that, while their money and equipment was welcome,

their values were not.

¶4. (C) Meyer said that on May 14 the European Union may agree to modify its sanctions regime against Uzbekistan, but that it is highly unlikely that sanctions will be removed completely. He said that he expects that the Uzbeks will "scream" in public about this decision for several months, but that the overall relationship would normalize thereafter. In particular, Meyer said that the sanctions decision likely will have little impact on continued German military basing in Uzbekistan. The air base in Termez, he said, is all about money; the Uzbeks make too much of it from the German presence to force Germany to close the base.

¶5. (C) Comment: The German Ambassador's description of German-Uzbek counterterrorism cooperation sounds familiar, as it essentially describes our own situation. We were struck by Meyer's comments about the future of the German base in Termez post-EU sanctions decision, particularly since, according to USDAO Tashkent reporting, the Uzbeks have specifically linked continued counterterrorism cooperation, including the base, to the lifting of sanctions. We do not know the extent to which the Ambassador's view is shared by his German military colleagues. While Termez might be all about money, the Uzbeks do not always see the economic value of a foreign military base as outweighing their own political considerations, as we discovered in 2005 at Karshi-Khanabad.
HANSON